

Jericho

Kelly Joe Phelps

It was not two days, a night and a day
I look back at the man he was before
a sorry stranger banged up on the shore
your warm arms tore the walls down.
the devil with the damn things anyway
they were of no use, just a frame
from there he would watch, watch only.
not taking a part in this world

I'd sold my mule and bale of hay
these shoes left, tattered and worn
they'd carry me to heaven or they'd walk straight to a hole
I didn't see you coming 'til I heard you there.
In one single breath, in two or three words
the old man crossed the bridge and down the side
and I was left standing holding my sword
dropped in on the ground, I didn't need it any more.

a soul to sink into, washing mine clean
I rolled like a hog on holiday
laughing boy laugh, smiling boy smile
this was no usual day.
my hunch back was straight backed my eyes were on the fire
then I finally remembered what living used to be like
playing in the ocean popping rhythms with your hands
turned the key in the lock and the door swung wide.

and what did we find inside?
a man with a reinvented view.
no shirt no pants, the old hang bird is skinned
floating in a cooking pot.
you stabbed me with honesty, passion and peace
and a will to move on with legs of steel
arms like popeye, giddy like olive,
dancing like sweet pea with a wide open grin
now I begin retelling the story
of the lost boy in chains, saved by a girl.